



Tips to Pack a Waste-Free Lunch

As a parent, you can help reduce lunchroom trash by packing a waste-free lunch for your child using the tips below:

Choose to Reuse: At the end of the lunch period, the primary items in the trashcan are Ziploc bags and plastic, disposable tableware. Packing your child's lunch with reusable containers and wraps is an easy way to reduce our lunchroom trash. There are so many great options out there for reusable lunchboxes and storage containers – from simple Tupperware to multi-compartment “bento boxes.” And, a container that can be used again means one less plastic bag in the trash.

Resources for reusables:

- In Celebration of Kids
- Ace
- The Homesteader
- Grocery stores
- <http://www.reuseit.com/>
- www.bentology.com/



If you need to pack a spoon or fork, please pack a metal one that can be taken home and washed and reused. If you don't want to send your best flatware to school, buy silverware odds and ends at a thrift store specifically for use in your child's school lunches. Or, purchase a washable metal or bamboo “spork” just for school lunches.

Reduce pre-packaged food: There are so many lunch choices that come individually pre-packaged, such as Lunchables and single-portion bags of chips. These items are easy for parents when packing lunch but the packaging is often not recyclable. Try to buy bulk or in bigger quantities and use reusable containers to pack small portions.

Take a break from Tetra Paks: Tetra Paks are the juice and milk boxes with foil on the inside and paper on the outside. They are not recyclable because they are made with two different materials, and they end up in the trash bins in the lunchroom every day. Instead of a juice or milk box, fill a reusable bottle at home or choose a beverage packaged in a recyclable plastic bottle or aluminum can.

Remind your child about what can be recycled in his/her lunch: While you are packing lunch, take a minute to talk with your child about what can be recycled. If you're not sure, please take a look at the list below or stop by the lunchroom anytime.

Recycle

- All plastics # 1 through 7 – this includes yogurt containers, cup-o-soups, water bottles, etc.
- Aluminum foil and cans
- Clean paper and cardboard
- Glass